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ABSTRACT

Four aspects of the interactive reading process, the parallel compensatory behaviors of bilingual students, and an instructional approach that reflects the needs of these students are described. Focus is on a reading strategies program for Native American students whose cultural environments vary greatly from the cultural environment of the public school and its curriculum. The interactive view of reading holds that readers interpret the author's meaning using their prior knowledge, purposes for reading, and the contextual constraints of the literacy event. The four aspects continuously interact while readers construct meaning. It is noted that bilingual students are at risk at every point in the model. An instructional program is described that was devised at the Eastern Montana College Reading Clinic for bilingual readers where teachers explained strategic reading (goal setting), modeled prediction making, coached students with strategy-based questions, and shifted assessment to the student. It is concluded that because of the years of reading failure for bilingual students, instruction needs to combine strategy training and attribution retraining in cooperative learning groups. Contains 23 references. (LB)

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A Reading Strategies Program for Native American Students

Barbara J. Walker

In classrooms across the nation students come from varying environments where beliefs, behaviors, and perspectives differ widely. Those students, including Native American students, whose cultural environments vary greatly from the cultural environment of the public school and its curriculum have difficulty learning to read. Because of their cultural and linquistic differences, Native American students find themselves at odds with the established curriculum. Often they speak and think in their native language or a non-standard "Indian English" more fluently than the English that is demanded in public school classrooms. Likewise, culture differences are not recognized in the textbooks or within the interaction patterns of the classroom.

Repeated failure to bridge the gap between the culture of the school and the culture of the family complicates these students' response to instruction; however, few instructional programs address these complications and the resultant needs of these students. This paper explains four aspects of the interactive reading process, the parallel compensatory behaviors of bilingual students, and an instructional approach that reflects the needs of these students.

Aspects of interactive reading

The interactive view of reading holds that readers interpret the author's meaning using their prior knowledge, purposes for reading, and the contextual constraints of the literacy event. The first aspect, then, is that readers combine what they know (reader-based inferencing) with information

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from the text (text-based inferencing) to construct meaning (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). Readers use textual information such as pictures, the letters in words, headings, and the structure of sentences to figure out the author's meaning (Stanovich, 1986). They use this textual information in combination with their prior knowledge. As they read, they say "That looks like a word I know, and it fits in this story."

The second aspect is that readers elaborate what and how they read (McNeil, 1987). As they read they say "Hey, I can remember this because it is like..." They make connections that help them remember and interpret *what* and *how* they are reading. These new connections become part of what readers know.

The third aspect of the interactive view is that readers monitor their understanding to see if it makes sense (Baker & Brown, 1984). When their interpretation does not make sense, a buzzer goes off in their heads and they vary their strategies to remove difficulties in interpreting meaning. These readers actively monitor their understanding of text through self-questions that direct the use of fix-up strategies.

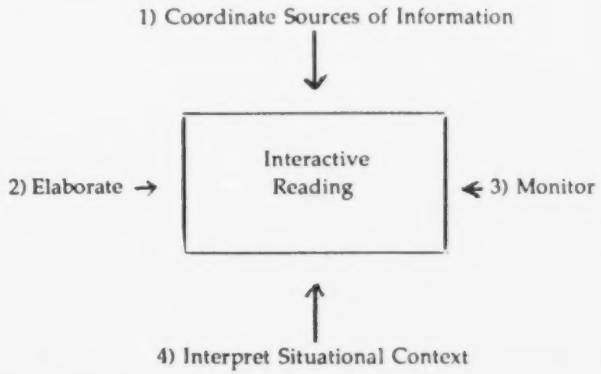
Likewise, the fourth aspect is that readers use the situational context to focus their purposes and frame their attitude toward the literacy event (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Winograd & Smith, 1987). For example, one student said, "Let's see, this is a history class and I need to read the chapter carefully looking for the major causes of the Battle of the Little Bighorn." Later that day, the same student read a novel and thought "I know how that character is feeling." The different situations affected how information sources were combined, what was elaborated, and how the text was monitored.

The model in Table 1 shows these four aspects as they continuously interact while readers construct meaning. Effective readers 1) coordinate sources of information (text and personal knowledge), 2) elaborate meaning and strategies, 3) check (monitor) their understanding, revising when necessary, and 4) use the context to focus their reading. However, when any one of these aspects are excluded for a period of time, readers become "at risk" for failure in reading.

Bilingual readers

When reading becomes difficult, bilingual readers shift away from a weakness and use compensatory strategies. However, sometimes these strategies inhibit rather than enhance meaning construction (Stanovich, 1986). When bilingual students habitually use compensatory behaviors that inhibit interactive reading they become "at risk" for reading failure. The interactive-compensatory theory suggests that reading difficulty occurs when students 1) over-rely on a single information source rather than combining sources, 2) frequently read difficult text limiting elaboration of content and strategies, 3) read without monitoring meaning resulting in passive reading and 4) define the context of reading as a failure situation.

Table 1: Interactive reading



Coordinate Sources of Information. At the onset of reading, students learn to coordinate sources of information. Often, however, bilingual students do not possess appropriate experiences with how English works, which limits their use of

background knowledge. They may understanding an experience in their own language but do not know how to represent this experience in English. Therefore, these student begin to rely on restating the text to answer the simple questions posed by the teacher. Initially, this strategy is certainly effective when the the teachers questions can be answered directly from the text. However, as these readers encounter more inconsiderate texts (texts that are not well organized and do not reveal question-answer relationships) and avoid using reader-based strategies, their text interpretations becomes increasingly sketchy. Thus, their overreliance on text-based inferencing becomes a weakness putting these readers "at risk."

Elaborate. If these students don't receive instruction that helps them integrate information sources, they rely on a single source and eventually read texts that are too difficult. In fact, bilingual readers are often placed in materials beyond their understanding; therefore they cease to elaborate the meaning relying exclusively on the words in the text. Likewise, studies indicate that readers from various cultural backgrounds interpret textual material differently. The inferences these students do make are influenced by their cultural experiences (Andersson & Gipe, 1983), but many of these inferences are considered incorrect by the teacher. This classroom situation heightens the students' task-definition that "When reading, this inferencing process doesn't work." When this happens, the gap between what readers know and what they are asked to read widens and they cannot elaborate either *what* or *how* they are learning. Instead, they increasingly rely on text-based information, seldom checking what they know.

The reciprocal relationships among cognitive skills that occur for effective readers are inhibited because these readers must allocate thinking solely to hazy meaning construction. They become unaware of the strategies they use and, in fact, do not elaborate vocabulary meaning which would, in turn, increase contextual knowledge and facilitate word identification (Stanovich, 1986). This failure to elaborate the information by tying it to their personal experiences results in

the inefficient strategy of trying to memorize lots of unfamiliar information in the hope that something will make sense. However, they become increasingly less active because nothing makes sense. By overrelying on text-based inferencing, the students rely on a single source of information limiting their interpretation which results in an increasingly passive stance to reading.

Monitor. When these students rely on the text and cease to elaborate their strategies, they develop a less active stance toward text. Their continual failure precludes the spontaneous use of reading strategies. Subsequently, the infrequent use of strategic reading results in a set of disorganized strategies and failure to check reading understanding (Bristow, 1985). When asked questions, they merely respond with "I don't know." They are not really lazy or defiant; they really don't know how to remedy the problem situation. They did read the text and a buzzer went off in their head telling them what they were reading was not making sense, but they didn't know how to remedy this situation. Instead, they "tend to reproduce inappropriate text segments or provide no response" (Davey, 1989, p. 696) and change their predictions less often relying on their initial prediction (Maria & MacGinitie, 1982). Since these readers have little experience constructing meaning, they passively read words without actively questioning their understanding.

Use Situational Context. This aspect of active reading permeates the bilingual students response to instruction. Studies of teacher-student interactions show that bilingual students respond differently in the traditional setting of teacher questioning from mainstream students who talk one at a time and respond with a right answer. Au and Kawakami (1985) found that bilingual children responded better when interaction between them and their teacher was cooperative letting children spontaneously talk though a story in order to understand it. Thus, "cultural compatibility in interactional patterns may be a necessary, and not just nice, aspect of effective reading instruction for culturally different minority students" (p. 411).

This difference between cultural interactions as well as the compensatory behavior of relying on the text while not elaborating or monitoring meaning complicates their reading problems. After an extended time, these students begin to attribute their failure to a lack of ability which "they believe is a fixed entity... and which they have little of" (Johnston & Winograd, 1985, p. 283). Because they haven't used inferencing when reading, they are generally unaware of the strategies they use when reading. They decide they will not try, because if they try and fail again, they are admitting they're "dumb." They are not really belligerent, but this presupposition leaves them no alternative but to define the context of reading as one of failure reducing their self-confidence (Johnston & Winograd, 1985). Repeated failure coupled with criticisms from parents and teachers contribute to the continued belief that "I'm not able to learn to read."

Instructional response

Bilingual students are "at risk" at every point in the model. They have overrelied on the text, ceased to elaborate the content and their strategies, become passive toward their own meaning construction, and finally, defined all literacy events as failure situations resulting in decreased effort. When reading failure becomes so complex, these students need to redefine reading as a problem-solving process where they can succeed. At the same time they need to identify effective strategies and see the relationship between the strategies they use and their text interpretation. Strategy instruction has been shown to enhance active, strategic reading for bilingual students (Hernandez, 1989). Furthermore, when strategy instruction is coupled with attributional retraining, these readers change not only their strategies, but also the attribution for their failure (Borkowski, Weyhing, & Carr, 1988; Schunk & Rice, 1987). In these programs, the teachers assume new roles: they explain, model, and coach strategies as they shift the control of strategy deployment to the students (Pearson, 1985). Initially, they explain what strategic reading is and how the targeted strategies fit into the reading process. In other words, they set

goals emphasizing a particular strategy like prediction. Second, teachers model the steps for performing the strategy and discuss when they would use this strategy. When modeling teachers think aloud about how they construct meaning (Davey, 1983); they make the internal thought process visible to the students. Third, teachers coach students as they "think aloud" during reading (Gaskins, 1989). Coaching this internal thought process helps students modify and elaborate their strategies. For bilingual students, coaching is most effective in a small group where they can share "how they got an answer" as well as "what they understood." Finally, teachers shift the control of meaning construction to the student. To do this, the teacher encourages students to talk about how successful their comprehension was and attribute that success to the strategies they use.

An instructional program was devised at the Eastern Montana College Reading Clinic for bilingual readers where teachers explained strategic reading (goal setting), modeled making predictions, coached the students with strategy-based questions, and shifted assessment to the student.

Goal setting. First, reading was defined as a problem-solving process where readers construct meaning using appropriate strategies. Stories were divided in natural occurring prediction points and put on overheads. After each section, the steps of strategic thinking were used interchangeably as the group of bilingual students shared their interpretations and strategies. I began by explaining that reading is basically a process of predicting what the author means (Goodman, 1967). The teacher explained that predictions are frequently used in our daily lives. For example, when I get dressed for school, I predict the weather (It is snowing, so it will be cold). If the prediction was incorrect because the temperature rises, we revise our prediction, take off our jacket, and continue our day. The goal of reading is similar: make predictions based on information in the text and what we know, revising that prediction when necessary.

Modeling. Using a short story, the teacher modeled the process by presenting reading as a bet with the author. The

teacher put "I bet ... " on a chart in the front of the room, read the title of a story from an overhead and made a bet. After this, the teacher put the phrase, "I already know that... " on the chart and explained that sometimes we make bets or guesses based on what we know. Then reader-based inferencing was modeled. Next, the teacher wrote on the chart "The text says..." and explained that sometimes we make bets or guesses because the text has hints about our bets. The teacher modeled text-based inferencing with the next line of the text. Thus, the prediction was made and the source of information used to make the bet explained.

When incongruencies occurred, the process of revising predictions was modeled. Self-statements like "Oops, that doesn't make sense, I better check the hints" were used to encourage rereading. The teacher then summarized important text clues and talked about what was known about these clues. A revised bet was made and reading continued. When this bet was confirmed, the teacher wrote "Yeah" on the chart and explained that when we are on the right track we reward ourselves.

Coaching. After the introduction of the chart and modeling the self-questions, a new story was read from the overhead. The betting was continued throughout the text as the strategies of prediction and revision were used alternately between the students and the teacher. To change the instructional context, these students discussed their predictions in small groups of three students. At the prediction points in the story, they summarized and reread the text and then discussed predictions and revisions. Then each group shared their divergent responses and the reasons for these responses with the teacher and other students.

As they shared their thinking, the teacher identified problem areas and modeled alternative ways to think through the story. By reinterpreting the students predictions and highlighting strategy use, the teacher phased in to coach thinking and phased out to let students independently use strategies. Sometimes the teacher used strategy-based questions to prompt students' reflections (See Table 2).

By participating in the group construction of meaning, the students learned to use the active-constructive process of reading. The small group sharing allowed time for these students to access their background knowledge in a comfortable setting. In fact, sometimes the students used their first language in the small group and then discussed in English with the teacher. This provided a tie between languages and ways to talk about inferences. During these discussion, the students learned to use their inferencing abilities when reading.

Table 2: Strategy-based questions

Does that fit with your previous prediction?
What source of information did you use in your thinking?
What can you tell yourself about the ... ?
Is that important information?
What can you say to yourself when you change your bet?

Shifting control. Self-assessment facilitated the shift of control from the teacher to the student. According to Johnston and Winograd, "self-assessment can force attention to the details of outcomes, and to the effects of the use of various strategies" (1985, p. 293). These students needed to graphically see the frequency of strategy use; therefore, we developed team charts that displayed the number of predictions made and sources of information used. During the story discussion, the number of predictions, text references, reader references, and checking references was recorded (See Table 3). The chart forced attention to the strategies they were using.

Table 3: Chart of reading strategies

I bet.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I know that.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The text says.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Oops.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Yeah.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Following the story reading each student met individually with the teacher to discuss their reading behavior. After reviewing the data on their group participation, they completed an open-ended statement about their meaning construction: "Today my reading was (poor, fair, good, excellent) because I used (predictions, checked the text, checked what I knew, checked with my group, changed my bet when I got more information, gave myself credit when I was right)." Consequently, the students evaluated both their strategies and comprehension after each selection (Wilson, 1989).

Finally, to refocus their attributions we asked the students to evaluate their strategy deployment in relation to the effort they expended. At this point we discussed the relationships among strategies, effort, text, and task to establish effective attributions for reading.

It is important to remember in using this process that if the first stories used are from the native culture, the student will be better able to relate the stories to their prior knowledge, make predictions, and use other effective reading strategies.

Summary

Because of the years of reading failure for bilingual students, instruction needs to combine strategy training and attribution retraining in cooperative learning groups. We designed instruction that set the goal of interactive reading--strategically combining text and personal knowledge. With groups of bilingual students, the teacher modeled and coached an interchangeable sequence of self-questions (Walker &

Mohr, 1985). To change the strategies and negative attributions, the teacher and students charted strategy deployment for the groups, and then, the students assessed their comprehension attributing text interpretation to both effort and strategy use. In the cooperative learning groups, strategies were shared, valued, and rewarded which helped the bilingual readers develop a repertory of procedures for constructing meaning and the language to talk about this construction. Thus these students did more than learn to read; they learned to control and talk about their own thinking.

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